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Pork-BOLTeR



ISSUE 94, Yule 2009/2010

FREE/DONATION

From Cissbury Ring to Titnore Woods the message is loud and clear **Hands off our precious Sussex countryside!**

A SURGE of people power looks like it has stopped Worthing Borough Council from selling off downland near Cissbury Ring.

A lightning emergency campaign, only launched at the Worthing Alliance meeting on October 29, included massive protests in Findon Valley on November 14 and outside the Town Hall on December 3.

In the face of public outrage, the council was forced to back down. First they tried an unacceptable ruse of disposing of the land on a 99-year lease (*much the same as selling it!*) and then, on December 3, agreed to look at short leases, public access and land stewardship, as urged by the dynamic Stop the Cissbury Sell-Off group (SCSO).

It's not quite all over yet and public meetings are planned for the New Year (see www.scsco.co.uk for updates), but this looks like being a remarkable success story in the space of just five weeks!

News is not so good from the other end of town, though, where Camp Titnore at Durrington is bracing itself for the onslaught

of the 875-home development.

Final full permission could be granted at Worthing Borough Council's development control committee on Thursday January 28.

Countryside lovers are urged to turn up at 5.30pm outside the Assembly Hall in Stoke Abbot Road for the crunch meeting at 6pm.

The sight of the new mega-ugly Tesco already blocking the view of Highdown Hill is sickening for all those who have spent the best part of a decade fighting the destruction of this important green lung.

Since 2006 there has also been a non-stop eco-protest on the site, Camp Titnore, which has received massive backing from the people of Worthing, even if the local media do their best to ignore its existence.

The whole £3bn West Durrington development is under the wing of Taylor-Wimpey, Persimmon Homes and Heron Homes (*headed by convicted crook Gerald Ronson, involved in the 1990 Guinness insider trading case - see also Remember Gaza, page 2*), who stand to make a fortune from the rape of the woodland.

Unlike in the Cissbury case, there is thus powerful pressure on Worthing council to give the go-ahead.

Are we really going to stand by and watch the bailiffs and police physically smash up Camp Titnore and drag the brave woodland defenders away, bloodied and screaming?

Or can the momentum of the Cissbury success spur the people of Worthing on to one last effort to stop this disaster in its tracks? The answer is in YOUR hands.

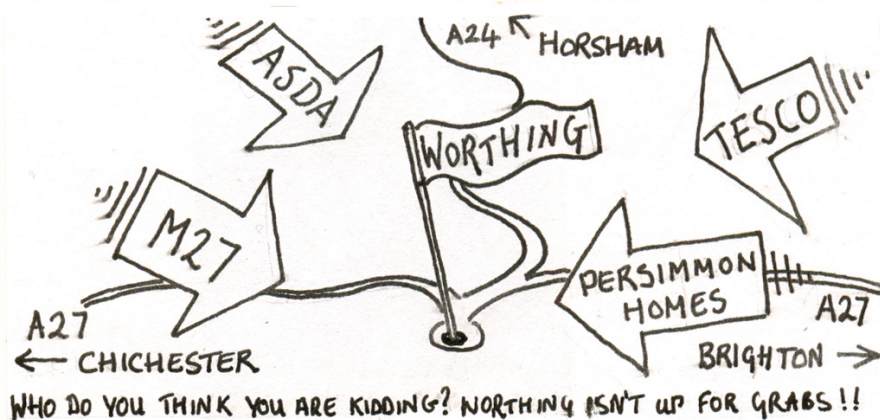
** For more info see www.protectourwoodland.co.uk or www.titnore.wordpress.com.*

Twigging Hazel

A COMEDY highlight of the Cissbury campaign was the appearance on the BBC's Politics Show on November 22 of Hazel Thorpe, Lib Dem councillor and wannabe Worthing MP.

Tottering across the Downs in high heels and an expensive-looking red coat, she added her support for the campaign having seen how many voters had turned up for the demo held the week before, which she and her party colleagues had neglected to attend. She warbled incoherently to the TV cameras: "I think it would bring the council back into a much better point of view from the public if we are seen to be **protecting their rights**."

Can this possibly be the same Lib Dem councillor Hazel Thorpe who, along with husband Robin Rogers, was heavily involved in Maybridge Keystone Club's controversial denial of the **public's rights** to access open space on the Durrington estate? (See *Porkbolter* 92, July 2009)



Last chance to save Titnore!

**Thursday January 28, 2010
Assembly Hall, Stoke Abbot Road, Worthing
Protest outside venue - 5.30pm
Worthing council planning meeting - 6pm**

Paddy Nicholls - never forgotten!

THE WORDS 'police' and 'injustice' seem to have a magnetic attraction for each other these days.

Whether it's the shooting of an innocent Brazilian electrician for the heinous offence of looking vaguely (*from half a mile away, with your brain disengaged*) like a terrorist suspect or the fatal attack on a newspaper vendor who had the brazen audacity to want to walk home from work through the City of London, the Dixon of Dock Green image of the honest and fair-minded copper is looking further from reality every day.

But how many Worthing people remember that in 1975 this town was the scene of **one of the most outrageous miscarriages of justice ever seen in this country**, in which the role of leading local policemen was, to say the least, rather dubious?

Paddy Nicholls ended up serving an incredible 23 years in jail for a 'murder' that in the end was proved not to have even happened.

The Porkbolter reported back in July 1998 that Mr Nicholls had been released from prison after being cleared of the murder of neighbour Gladys Heath - new pathologist reports showed she had died from a heart attack, not at the hands of Mr Nicholls, who found her in a collapsed state. Funnily enough, this was also the finding of the original pathologist's initial report, but for unknown reasons he suddenly changed his mind and decided she had been murdered...

And we quoted former Detective Superintendent Laurie Finley - a police officer who stood up to his own force to expose the truth - as declaring: "This has discredited the police, the medical profession and the law. A lot of people must have got an awful lot on their conscience. This was a deadly serious miscarriage of justice."

Mr Finley, who had always maintained Mr Nicholls was innocent, has

Worthing History Notebook

disturbingly revealed that he took early retirement from the police in 1976 when he was told **"people were out to get him"**. Mr Nicholls' release made national TV and radio news and was the main front page story in *The Guardian* on June 13 1998, as well as page 3 in *The Times*. Funnily enough, though, it wasn't important enough to make the front pages of our local rags, being relegated to pages 8 and 19 of the Worthing Herald and Worthing Guardian (which was then the rival town newspaper).

So what happened next? Well, we recently spoke to a member of Mr Nicholls' family who explained that when he left prison after 23 years, at the age of 69, he was a broken man in poor health, as you might expect. He had been made to suffer more, getting no parole, just because he refused to admit to something he hadn't done. There's justice for you.

Like Mr Finley, Mr Nicholls knew certain persons would be 'out to get him' in Worthing and used his compensation money, when it came through, to move to Greece, where he died in 2005.

The enormity of what happened to him is hard to grasp. As Mr Nicholls said just after winning his appeal in 1998: "They have taken a third of my life, haven't they?". Nobody was ever brought to justice over what happened to this innocent man. As is usual with situations that embarrass the powers-that-be, it was pushed to one side with the hope that it would quickly fade from the public's memory.

But we say that Paddy Nicholls, and the way he was treated by the police and the courts, must never be forgotten by the people of Worthing.

Students are sold out

TWO years ago we warned that *Worthing High School* was about to sell out to Big Business with a new Trust status (*Porkbolter*, Yule 2007). The Worthing Herald's *Business Matters* magazine reported in November that the school is celebrating its new status as a Business and Enterprise Specialist School. It said: "Director of enterprise Rhys Price..." (*who needs teachers?*) "... not only spoke about the drive to continue to build on the large number of businesses who support curriculum initiatives, but also the development of an **enterprise culture within the school**." *We hate to say we told you so, but...*

Remember Gaza!

"REMEMBER Gaza" is the rallying cry for a protest to be held down the road in Brighton on Monday January 18.

In January 2009, Israel's brutal bombing campaign and ground offensive killed over 1,400 Palestinians, including 314 children. Said the *Smash EDO* campaign: "Here in Brighton EDO MBM/ITT manufacture some of the weapons components that devastated so many lives.

"We will not allow those who supported their pain and profited from their suffering to go unchallenged. We will not let this genocide be forgotten. On the first anniversary after their deaths, we will rise up. We will take to the streets. We will remember...". Protesters are asked to assemble in Brighton at 1pm and wear black. For more details, including the meeting place, go to www.smashedo.org.uk nearer the date.

Palestine was also the subject of *Worthing Alliance's* November meeting, when a local speaker gave an illustrated first-hand account of a recent solidarity visit to the ancient land now suffering so cruelly under US and UK backed Israeli occupation.

And anyone wondering what this has got to do with Worthing should have been watching Channel 4's documentary about the powerful pro-Israel lobby in the UK, which seems to have the major political parties firmly under its thumb.

The programme, screened on November 16, told how *Alan Rusbridger*, editor of *The Guardian*, had received a visit from two leading Israel supporters following an article in his paper by Chris McGreal that compared Israel to apartheid South Africa. One of these threatening characters accused the Guardian of fomenting anti-Semitic attacks, warning: "There is a line which can't be crossed, you've crossed it, and you must stop this."

And who was this Zionist bully boy? None other than convicted crook and property developer *Gerald Ronson*, the money man behind the plan to concrete over Worthing's very own Titnore Woods (*see front*).

Pork-scratchings

APART from the success of the Cissbury campaign, the other good news in November was that the *South Downs National Park* is to become a reality in 2010, despite heavy opposition from Conservatives and big land-owners. The next key issue will be who sits on the authority and whether or not this is to be the kind of National Park through which it will be possible to build an A27 bypass, still very much on the agenda of the local road lobby (see *Worthing Advertiser*, every week).

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WITH opinion polls showing 70% of the British public want our troops out of *Afghanistan*, what is the Government's reaction? Listen to the people in a democratic way and bring 'em all home? Nope, just ramp up the flag-waving propaganda campaign, trying to pretend our brown-nosed backing for the US corporate global empire is something to be proud of.

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SOMPTING Morris will lead the traditional festive *Wassail* at 8pm on Tuesday January 5 in Tarring High Street, Worthing.

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WE may think our cops here are bad (*see above and most previous Porkbolters*), but American police **used a Taser gun on a ten year old girl who was arguing with her mum!** Reported the *Daily Telegraph* on November 19: "The officer had been called to the girl's home in Ozark, Arkansas, by her mother because she was behaving in an unruly manner and refusing to take a shower." (*See also vastminority.blogspot.com*)

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WORTHING Alliance continues to play an important role by bringing together town campaigners from various groups every month to swap notes and plan ahead, as well as boosting the brewing industry. It's taking a break for Xmas, but keep an eye on the events section at www.eco-action.org/porkbolter for the next date and venue.

Keeping you in the picture

THE PORKBOLTER is an independent newsletter, named after the odd traditional term for Worthing residents, that tries to shed some light on matters avoided by other local media. To get the next six issues through the post send a donation of £3 or more payable to The Porkbolter at PO Box 4144, Worthing BN14 7NZ. You can also pick up a copy at 'Green' at 63 Victoria Road, Worthing (near the station). Or read it at www.eco-action.org/porkbolter, which also includes a regularly updated events section. We also run an email list, which you can join for free via porkbolter@eco-action.org.

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